Life Urges New Probe Of Assassination

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Life Magazine today questioned the validity of the single-assassin theory in the death of President Kennedy and called for a new investigating body to re-examine the evidence.

The magazine said in an editorial that a "reasonable—and disturbing—doubt remains" as to whether Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing the President.

On the eve of the third anniversary of President Kennedy's death, Life thus became probably the most influential in a growing list of advocates for a new assassination inquiry.

Films Used

Much of the magazine's reasoning that doubt exists comes from the attitude of Texas Gov. John B. Connally Jr. and films of the assassination by Dallas amateur photographer Abraham Zapruder.

Life said Connally, after studying the Zapruder films recently, is more convinced now than he ever was that he and Kennedy were hit by separate bullets at the Triple Underpass in Dallas.

No Time for 3 Shots

The Warren Commission verdict that Oswald acted alone depended on its findings that one bullet went through tissue in Kennedy's upper right shoulder, emerged from his throat and struck Connally in the chest, wrist and thigh. A second bullet caused Kennedy's fatal head wound.

According to the commission's own findings, Oswald did not have time to fire three shots from the 6.5 mm. Mannlicher-Carcano carbine.

Connally had insisted before the Warren Commission that he had heard the first shot that hit Kennedy, turned to look at the President and felt a second shot hit him."

Life said Connally recently viewed blowups of the Zapruder film and was even more convinced that his earlier testimony had been correct. Life quoted Connally:

"They talk about the one-bullet or two-bullet theory, but as far as I'm concerned, there is no theory. There is my absolute knowledge . . . that one bullet caused the President's first wound, and that an entirely separate shot struck me. It's a certainty, I'll never change my mind."

Frame 234

Connally picked frame 234 of Zapruder's 8-mm film of the motorcade as the point where he was hit. The Warren Commission had concluded that Kennedy was struck first between frames 210-225.

The camera runs at 18.3 frames a second. The Warren Commission determined that a minimum of 2.3 seconds was required between shots from Oswald's rifle.

The time between frames 210 and 234, 1.3 seconds, would not have been sufficient to permit two firings from Oswald's rifle, using the Warren Commission's findings that 2.3 seconds were required.

'Reasonable Doubt'

"The evidence, particularly that given by Governor Connally and his interpretation of the Zapruder film, does not prove that Oswald had a co-conspirator," said Life. "Nor does it disprove it. It does show that reasonable—and disturbing—doubt remains."

The national interest deserves clear resolution of the doubts, said Life. "A new investigating body should be set up, perhaps at the initiative of Congress. In a scrupulously objective and unhurried atmosphere, without the pressure to give reassurance to a shocked country it should re-examine the evidence and consider other evidence the Warren Commission failed to evaluate."